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Mao Zedong Is the Great Founder, Explorer and Pioneer of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

Wang Weiguang[a]
[a] Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
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Mao Zedong Is the Great Founder, Explorer and Pioneer of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

Wang Weiguang

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毛泽东在革命战争年代就指明了中国革命的前途，即通过新民主主义革命不间断地进入到社会主义革命，最终建设社会主义和共产主义。新中国成立后，毛泽东创建并不断完善社会主义经济制度以及与之相适应的政治制度，领导了大规模的社会主义经济、政治和文化建设，奠定了中国特色社会主义的制度前提、思想保证、物质基础，创造了社会主义建设的有利外部环境。在这个过程中，毛泽东创造了一系列独创性的关于中国社会主义建设的理论成果，提出实现马克思主义普遍真理同中国实际的第二次结合，走自己的路，探索适合中国国情、具有中国特点的社会主义建设道路。这是毛泽东在中国社会主义发展史上的重大理论贡献，为实现马克思主义中国化第二次历史性飞跃做了充分的思想酝酿与理论准备，不仅是中国特色社会主义理论、道路、制度形成的历史和逻辑的起点，而且是中国革命、建设和改革的一条指导原则。毛泽东在探索中既留下了成功的经验，也留下了失误的教训，这两方面都为当今中国特色社会主义建设积累了宝贵经验和重要启示。因此，不论是从历史实践上还是从理论逻辑上说，毛泽东都是中国特色社会主义事业的伟大奠基者、探索者和先行者。

关键词：毛泽东　马克思主义中国化　社会主义建设　中国特色社会主义

As early as the revolutionary wars, Mao Zedong clearly pointed out the future path of the Chinese revolution: to go through the new democratic revolution and advance uninterruptedly into the stage of socialist revolution, and finally to build socialism and communism. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, he created and continuously improved the socialist economic system and the corresponding political system, led the large-scale socialist economic, political and cultural construction, established the institutional preconditions, ideological guarantees and material basis for socialism with Chinese characteristics, and brought about a favorable external environment for China's socialist construction. During this process, Mao originated a series of theories about China's socialist construction. In proposing to achieve the second combination of the universal truth of Marxism with China's realities and to go China's own way and explore a path of building socialism which suits China's national conditions and has Chinese characteristics, he made

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a great theoretical contribution to the history of China's socialist development. His ideas provided ample ideological gestation and theoretical preparation for the second historic leap of the sinicization of Marxism. They served not only as the starting point of the history and logic of the theory, road and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics but also as one of the guiding principles of China's revolution, construction and reform. Mao's exploration left us with experience of success and lessons from mistakes, both of which enabled us to store up valuable experience and important inspiration for today's construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, whether in terms of historical practice or theoretical logic, Mao is the great founder, explorer and pioneer of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Keywords: Mao Zedong, sinicization of Marxism, socialist construction, socialism with Chinese characteristics

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The practice and exploration of socialist construction led by Mao Zedong and today's great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics led by the Communist Party of China (hereafter referred to as the Party), are two developmental stages of the same big event. The former provides exploration and preparation for the latter and the latter is the continuation and development of the former. The two stages, both interrelated and distinct, are parts of the overall historical process of the Chinese people's fulfilment of the Chinese Dream under the leadership of the Party, the dream of socialist modernization and the great renewal of the Chinese nation. Whether in terms of historical practice or theoretical logic, Mao is the great founder, explorer and pioneer of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

As the founder of the new socialist China, after guiding the accomplishment of the historical tasks of winning the new democratic revolution, building up new China and restoring the Chinese national economy, Mao led the three great socialist transformations of private ownership of the means of production in a timely fashion and set up the basic socialist system. He was the first to propose that China should go its own way, achieving the combination of the basic principles of Marxism with China's realities for the second time and exploring a road of socialist construction that is suited to China's specific conditions and has Chinese characteristics. Though Mao made serious mistakes and suffered big setbacks in his exploration practice, his achievements were still enormous and outstanding. He set up the basic socialist system, led large-scale socialist construction, accumulated both material and intellectual socialist asset, formed unique theories concerning socialist construction and gained valuable experience and lessons with regard to it, and provided the systemic conditions, material basis, theoretical preparations and valuable experience for inaugurating and developing the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

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I. Mao Achieved Great Success in Socialist Construction and Established the Systemic Conditions and Material Basis for Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

When, in the 20th century, the Chinese people, a quarter of the world population, stepped onto the road of socialism, it was a momentous historical event for China's developmental process and even for the whole world in. It fundamentally changed the direction of the development of Chinese history and had a profound impact on the course of world history. It had far-reaching and important theoretical and practical significance for the establishment and advancement of today's socialist cause with Chinese characteristics.

As early as the period of revolutionary wars, Mao clearly pointed out the future path of the Chinese revolution: to advance uninterruptedly through the new democratic revolution to the stage of socialist revolution, and finally to build socialism and communism. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, he successfully led the way in opening up a road of socialist transformation with Chinese characteristics and creating and continuously improving the socialist economic system and the corresponding political system. He led large-scale socialist economic, political and cultural construction, established the systemic preconditions, ideological guarantees and material basis for socialism with Chinese characteristics, and brought about a favorable external environment for China's socialist construction.

1. He guided in the fulfillment of the task of socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production and created and continuously improved the socialist economic system.

Despite the extremely hard conditions after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Party and the people quickly achieved the full restoration and rapid development of the national economy under Mao's leadership. He then started thinking of the problem of China's transition to socialism. On September 24, 1952, at the meeting of the Party Central Committee Secretariat, he put forward his strategic thinking on how China could make a gradual transition from its present situation to socialism. In December 1953, he raised in its complete form the Party's general line for the socialist transition period: "The time between the founding of the People's Republic of China and the basic completion of socialist transformation is a period of transition. The Party's general line or general task for the transition period is basically to accomplish the country's industrialization and the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce over a fairly long period of time."[1] Under his leadership, China launched an all-round campaign of three big socialist transformations of the private ownership of the means of production, a campaign that successfully opened a new road of socialist transformation with Chinese characteristics. For capitalist industry and commerce, a series of state capitalist transition models moving from lower to higher stages was adopted, which enabled the peaceful redemption and purchase of bourgeois assets and created a unique road of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. For individual

1 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 6, p. 316.

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farming, the principles of voluntariness and mutual benefit, demonstration models, and state assistance were followed, creating forms of socialist collective ownership ranging from mutual-aid teams to preliminary and advanced agricultural cooperatives. For individual handicraft industry, similar models of transformation were adopted.

By the end of 1956, China had achieved a definitive victory in the socialist transformation of the private ownership of the means of production. Of its national economy, 92.9 percent was transformed into various types of socialist enterprise: the state-owned economy, the collective cooperative economy and the joint state-private economy. The socialist collective economy was set up in the countryside, with nearly all agricultural land becoming publicly owned and 96.3 percent of households joining agricultural cooperatives. Most handicraft workers also joined various collective handicraft industry groups. A socialist economic system based on the state-owned economy and the collective economy was thus basically established.[2] After 1956, it must be admitted that there were some twists and turns in the process of large-scale socialist construction after 1956, such as the hasty transition to "purer and purer public ownership" and the overemphasis on people's communes being "large in size and public in nature," but the fundamental socialist economic system did not change greatly. In fact, it was continuously strengthened, creating the economic conditions for reform and opening up and socialist modernization in the new era.

2. In order to adapt to the construction of the socialist economic base, Mao led the people to set up and continuously improve socialist political and legal systems.

Mao first led the Party to establish a socialist state system, the people's democratic dictatorship. "State system" means a country's political system. As a type of state system, the people's democratic dictatorship is, at its heart, democracy for the people and dictatorship for one's foes, with the working class as its leading force. The people's democratic dictatorship is in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat; it is the concrete form taken by proletarian dictatorship in China. To practice the broadest possible democracy for the people, Mao led the establishment of the People's Congress system which serves as China's fundamental political system. At the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Party Central Committee, Mao clearly pointed out that China would not adopt the parliamentary system of bourgeois republics, but would adopt the Soviet system of the proletarian republics. However, "our system is different in content from the Soviet system of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union, because ours is a People's Soviet based on a worker-peasant alliance."[3] This means that the People's Congress system is neither the bourgeois parliamentary system nor the Soviet system of the Soviet Union. It is unique and scientific and is the fundamental political system that is fully suited to China's specific situation. It is an important means and the highest form enabling the Chinese people to become masters of their country, and it embodies the

2 History Research Centre of the CPC Central Committee, *The History of the Communist Party of China*, vol. 2, Part 1, p. 360.

3 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 5, p. 265.

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distinctive features of China's socialist democracy. On the premise of implementing the People's Congress system, Mao led to the establishment of a complete set of fundamental socialist political systems. A system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party was created and has become one of China's basic political systems, providing an institutional platform with Chinese characteristics for democratic parties, mass organizations and people from all walks of life to practice democratic consultation and participate in the administration and discussion of state affairs. He established a national policy on ethnic affairs and a system of regional autonomy for ethnic minorities to correctly handle the inter-ethnic relationships. Under the unified leadership of the state, autonomous institutions were set up in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities so that they could exercise their right to autonomy and implement regional autonomy. Unlike the Soviet-style federal system, this political system is an institutional arrangement made according to the specific circumstances of China's historical development, cultural characteristics, ethnic relations and ethnic distribution, etc. and in line with the common interests and development needs of all ethnic groups. While leading the creation of a series of basic socialist political institutions, Mao personally directed the formulation and promulgation of the first constitution of the People's Republic of China. Based on the constitution, relevant laws and regulations were enacted in the fields of politics, economy, culture and Party building, thereby initially building up China's socialist legal system.

After entering the period of all-round socialist construction, China saw the further development of its fundamental socialist political system. The state system of the people's democratic dictatorship was continuously strengthened. A great victory was won in the War to Resist United States Aggression and Aid Korea. A rebellion of the reactionary clique of the upper social strata in Tibet was put down, ethnic separatist forces were suppressed, and social stability was maintained. The Sino-Indian Border War of Self-Defense and other military actions were carried out to fight foreign aggression, defend national sovereignty and consolidate socialist state power. National People's Congresses were held in 1954, 1959 and 1964, the people's democracy grew stronger and the fundamental national political systems operated robustly. The Communist Party and the democratic parties built up a relationship of long-term coexistence and mutual supervision. The democratic parties and people from all walks of life actively participated in the governance and discussion of state affairs and the political consultation system developed smoothly. Following establishment of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, four other autonomous regions were set up successively from 1955 to 1965: the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region. The system of regional ethnic autonomy was further improved.

3. Mao led large-scale socialist construction, building up a solid physical foundation for the consolidation and development of socialism.

While establishing the socialist system in China, Mao led a massive campaign of socialist

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construction and issued a clarion call for the socialist modernization of industry, agriculture, science and technology and national defense. Great achievements were made in these fields and in culture, diplomacy and other areas, leading to the formation of a relatively complete industrial system and national economic system and greatly enhancing the standard of people's material and cultural lives.

Proactive efforts were made to promote socialist industrialization. The industrial system and disposition of industries took their basic shape, and industrial productivity rose considerably. The national industry that the Party inherited from old China was a total mess and Chinese socialist industrialization actually started on the basis of "poverty and blankness." Under Mao's leadership, the whole Party and the people of the nation threw themselves into the struggle. They worked hard and achieved great successes, vigorously carrying out socialist industrial construction and quickly lifting the country's industry from its state of poverty and backwardness. By 1965, in the energy industry, generating capacity reached 67.6 billion watts and the power grid basically covered the whole country; in the coal industry, modernization developed steadily and the total production reached 232 million tons; in the petroleum industry, complete self-sufficiency was achieved and the crude oil production reached 11.31 million tons, casting into the Pacific Ocean the title of "oil-poor country" that had long plagued China; in the metallurgical industry, both production and variety of iron and steel were upgraded to a much higher level, with the total steel output reaching 12.23 million tons and a large number of key iron and steel enterprises being set up including such top ten companies as Anshan Iron and Steel Corporation, Wuhan Iron and Steel Corporation and Baotou Iron and Steel Corporation; in the machinery industry, a complete range of machine manufacturing systems took shape, with the self-sufficiency rate of major mechanical equipment reaching over 90 percent and textile machinery and other products not only fully meeting domestic needs but also being exported to many countries and regions as complete packages; and electronics, atomic energy, aerospace and other emerging industries were gradually developed from scratch or from small beginnings.[4] In terms of industrial disposition, 531 large and medium-sized industrial projects were completed.[5] While coastal industrial bases were being vigorously developed, the majority of inland provinces also established their own modern industries whose share of national industrial output continued to increase. As a whole, the socialist industrial system attained a considerable scale and a certain technical level, while its disposition became more rational and its capacity was considerably strengthened.

Great efforts were made to promote socialist agricultural modernization. Agricultural infrastructure, as well as the level of agricultural mechanization, was significantly improved. Due to China's specific situation, Mao highlighted the position of agriculture in the national

4 History Research Centre of the CPC Central Committee, *The History of the Communist Party of China*, vol. 2, Part 2, pp. 732-733.

5 Liu Rixin, *A Brief History of New China's Economic Construction*, p. 229.

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economy. He stressed, "The whole Party should attach great importance to agriculture. Agriculture has a vital bearing on the nation's economy and the people's livelihood. Take heed, for it is very dangerous not to grasp grain production. If this is ignored, there will be widespread disorder some day."[6] He also said, "Having food in the hand/is like standing firm on the land/Radiance on face/with confidence in mind."[7] On the premise of the collectivization of agriculture, agricultural modernization forged ahead vigorously. From 1958 to 1965, more than 150 large and medium-sized water conservancy facilities were built, and the Yellow, Hai, Huai and other rivers were brought under control to a considerable extent. These water systems, once threats to people's life and production, became favorable elements in socialist agricultural development. The irrigated proportion of the country's arable land increased from 24.4 percent in 1957 to 31.9 percent in 1965. With the gradual improvement of infrastructure, China also made great progress in agricultural mechanization and modernization, and modern machinery and chemical fertilizers played a more and more important role in enhancing agricultural production. From 1957 to 1965, the tractor-ploughed share of total arable land climbed from 2.4 percent to 15 percent, the mechanically irrigated share of total irrigated land increased from 4.4 percent to 24.5 percent, and the amount of fertilizer applied rose from 3.4 to 16.7 pounds per acre.[8] Meanwhile, great achievements were also made in terms of popularization of improved seed varieties, soil and water conservation, afforestation, soil improvement, etc. Overall, socialist agriculture was comprehensively developed; agriculture infrastructure and modernization grew better and better, and agriculture output increased by a large margin.

The modernization of science and technology was vigorously promoted. Very significant achievements were made and the fruits of science and technology were widely applied. Mao attached great importance to scientific and technological development, and pointed out clearly, "We must fight the battle of science and technology and we must fight it well. ...If we are not engaged in science and technology, we can never increase productivity."[9] He guided the establishment of the State Council Science Planning Commission and the State Scientific and Technological Commission. *The Outline of Long-term Plans for Scientific and Technological Development from 1956 to 1967* (or "The 12-year Long-term Plan for Scientific and Technological Development") was formulated in 1956 and basically completed in 1962, ahead of time. In 1963, he again directed the formulation of the *Scientific and Technological Development Plan 1963-1972* ("The 10-year Scientific Plan"). Under Mao's leadership, China made great progress in the enterprise of science and technology and organized quite a strong team of scientists and technicians. By the end of 1965, the country had a total of 2.458 million technicians in the natural sciences, 1,714 specialized scientific institutions, and 120,000

6 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 199.
7 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 84.
8 Liu Rixin, *A Brief History of New China's Economic Construction*, p. 233.
9 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 351.

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scientific researchers.[10] A national research system was set up consisting of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, various institutions affiliated to ministries, provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the central government, military organizations, universities, etc. There was a lot of progress in terms of basic scientific research, e.g., the synthetic bovine insulin was obtained in 1965, a world first. A series of significant achievements were made in the application of science and technology. Many new materials, instruments and meters, precision machinery and large-scale equipment were manufactured. Advanced high-grade precision equipment such as computers, electron microscopes, radio telescopes, high-speed cameras, ammonia molecular clocks, 300,000 kilowatt dual-water inner-cooling generators and so on, were produced on a trial basis. These techniques were widely applied in industry, agriculture, national defense and other fields, improving China's overall level of science and technology.

The modernization of national defense was comprehensively promoted. With remarkable breakthroughs in cutting-edge technologies, China's defense modernization began to take shape. In the practice of international military contests, Mao clearly recognized that we should never rely on other countries for defense technologies, especially cutting-edge technologies, and we must be self-reliant, doing our own research and establishing an independent modern defense system. As early as the mid-1950s, Mao made it clear that we must correctly handle the relationship between economic development and national defense construction, focusing on the development of cutting-edge defense technologies. In particular, he proposed the grand strategy of developing an atomic bomb, a hydrogen bomb and a man-made satellite. Under his enthusiastic advocacy and concerned guidance, China trialled its first experimental nuclear reactor in June 1958 and began to develop a nuclear-powered submarine. In June 1959, the Soviet Union ceased to provide China with assistance with nuclear and missile technologies. The next month, Mao, with strategic boldness, proposed that we go it alone and, starting from scratch, independently develop cutting-edge technologies, especially the atomic bomb. In November 1960, the DF-1 liquid short-range ballistic missile, a copy of a Soviet missile, was successfully launched, marking a major turning point in the history of Chinese military equipment. On June 29, 1964, China successfully launched the DF-2 short-range surface-to-surface missile it had developed itself, and on October 16, 1964, it exploded its first atomic bomb, one it had developed itself. On October 27, 1966, China successfully tested attaching a nuclear warhead to a missile. At the same time, the country also made considerable progress in developing armaments for its naval and air forces. These achievements in cutting-edge technologies and defense modernization reflected China's rapid development in defense science and technology, greatly enhancing the country's position in the international arena and providing powerful military protection for the cause of socialism.

Education, health, sports and other enterprises flourished, and the masses' quality of life

10 History Research Centre of the CPC Central Committee, *The History of the Communist Party of China*, vol. 2, Part 2, p. 689.

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and living standards were significantly enhanced. Mao, who was dedicated to improving material and cultural life of the mass of the people, always attached great importance to the overall development of the socialist undertaking as well as of the all-round development of man under conditions of socialism. He energetically advocated education and set forth the socialist educational policy as early as 1957: "Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, ideologically, physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture."[11] By 1965, the number of China's school students had reached 130 million, with about 116.21 million in 1.68 million primary schools, and the enrollment rate of school-age children had reached 84.7 percent, with about 9.34 million in 18,102 middle schools and about 0.67 million in 434 colleges and universities.[12] The educational level of the Chinese people improved enormously. Mao also put great emphasis on public health, an enterprise directly related to people's physical condition. With his support and guidance, China established a relatively complete medical and health care system and set up medical treatment networks in both urban and rural areas. By 1965, sanitary and epidemic prevention stations and women and children's health stations had already been set up at three levels: the province, the prefecture and the county. Most of the communes had their own clinics, and various types of grassroots health institutions covered all corners of the country. The masses' patriotic public health campaign was conducted on all fronts and remarkable achievements were made in the prevention of epidemic diseases. Smallpox, cholera, schistosomiasis and other infectious diseases, once rampant in old China, were either extinct or basically eliminated. Sport flourished as well. The National Games was successfully held and great progress was made in competitive sports, with Chinese athletes winning many world championships. Sport developed even more rapidly among the masses; one mass sports movement after another was launched, greatly improving the physical fitness of the mass of the people. Mao led the Party and the government in improving people's lives in every respect and greatly raising their material standard of living. Compared with that of 1957, the yield of pork, lamb, vegetables and other subsidiary food stuffs had grown by more than 30 percent by 1964 and the output of textiles, bicycles, radios and other daily needs had grown by more than 50 percent.[13] All of this fully reflects the advantages of the socialist system in enhancing people's quality of life and their standard of living.

Mao led the large-scale construction of socialist culture, and proposed and continuously developed and improved the guiding thought, fundamental standards and policy directions of China's ideological and cultural construction, gradually forming a socialist cultural system which provided the ideological guarantee for socialist development in China and demonstrated

11 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 226.

12 Department of Planning and Finance of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, ed., *China's Education Achievements—Statistics 1949-1983*, pp. 20-23, 226.

13 People's Publishing House, ed., *Major Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Third People's Congress of the People's Republic of China*, p. 8.

new vitality in the development of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics in the new era. He also led the establishment of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, drew up an independent foreign policy and actively developed the widest international friendship and cooperation, creating a favorable international environment for socialism with Chinese characteristics.

II. Mao Made Original Theoretical Achievements Concerning Socialist Construction, Providing the Guiding Thought and Theoretical Preparation for Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

During the process of leading socialist construction, Mao originated a series of theories about China's socialist construction which greatly speeded up the process of the sinicization of Marxism and provided the correct ideological guidance and important theoretical preparation for socialism with Chinese characteristics.

1. He urged the second combination of Marxism with Chinese realities, establishing the overall guiding principle for the construction of Chinese-style socialism.

The first of Mao's greatest theoretical contributions to Marxism and to the cause of socialism and communism was achieving the first combination of Marxism with Chinese revolutionary practice, and the second was proposing and initially exploring the second combination of Marxism with Chinese construction. The purpose of the first combination was to find China's own road of revolution; the purpose of the second was to seek China's own path of construction. In the course of the new democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, through combining the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, Mao found a path with Chinese characteristics for the two revolutions, formulated their guiding theories, principles and policies, and established the significant theoretical fruit of the first great combination: Mao Zedong Thought. When China entered the stage of socialist construction, he took the lead in putting forward the important idea of the second combination, namely the combination of Marxism with the realities of Chinese construction. As the construction enterprise expanded on all fronts in China and the shortcomings of the Soviet model gradually rose to the surface, Mao increasingly recognized the importance, necessity and urgency of seeking a path of socialist construction which suited China's specific situation. At the Politburo meeting of March 12, 1956, he urged people to rack their brains to solve the problems of the country's revolution and construction by themselves. Then on March 23 of the same year, at an enlarged meeting of the Party Central Committee Secretariat, he proposed "to combine the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of China's revolution and construction so as to explore the road of socialist construction in our country." A few days later, on April 4, he explicitly put forward the proposition of the second combination: "The most important thing is to think independently and combine the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete

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practice of China's revolution and construction. We realized this combination only after we had suffered great losses during the period of democratic revolution. The combination helped us to win victory in the new democratic revolution. Now we are in the period of socialist revolution and construction, and we need to realize the second combination and find the path for building socialism in China. …We should consider from all aspects how to do things in accordance with China's situation. …Now we must try even harder to find the specific road for building socialism in China."[14] It was through this kind of theoretical thinking that he took the lead in stressing that China must draw lessons and even warnings from the experience of the Soviet Union and independently search for a road for building socialism which corresponded to China's conditions and had Chinese characteristics. In his speech "On Ten Major Relationships," he warned, "Particularly worthy of attention is the fact that in the Soviet Union, certain defects and errors that occurred in the course of their building socialism have lately come to light. Do you want to follow the detours they have made? It was by drawing lessons from their experience that we were able to avoid certain detours in the past, and there is all the more reason for us to do so now."[15] While revising the political report to be delivered at the Eighth Party Congress, he wrote, "Ours is an oriental country and also a big country. Therefore, our country had many features of its own not only in the process of democratic revolution but also in the period of socialist transformation and construction. In the future after the socialist society is built up, our country will still possess many unique features."[16] When studying the Soviet text *Political Economy*, he applauded its comment that "each country should have their own special and concrete forms and methods of socialist construction," and expressed the view that "the universal law must be combined with the specific features."[17] By proposing to achieve the second combination of the universal truth of Marxism with China's realities, and saying we should go our own way and explore a path for building socialism which suited China's national conditions and had Chinese characteristics, Mao made a great theoretical contribution to the history of China's socialist development. His proposal provided ample ideological gestation and theoretical preparation for the second historic leap in the sinicization of Marxism. It served not only as the starting point of the history and logic of the theory, road and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics but also as one of the guiding principles of China's revolution, construction and reform.

2. He reached the theoretical conclusion that China was at the stage of underdeveloped socialism, specifying the state of the country and the strategic objective of Chinese-style socialist construction.

To realize the second combination of Marxism with Chinese realities and to step onto the

14 Wu Lengxi, *Recalling Chairman Mao: Fragments of Some Big Historical Events I Witnessed*, pp. 9-10.
15 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 23.
16 Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 6, p. 143.
17 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 116.

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road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, it was first necessary to work out the real national conditions that Chinese socialist construction would confront. Only by making clear the national situation and being based on reality could China achieve the second combination. In judging the state of the country, the most important thing was to undertake a scientific analysis of China's development stage. After in-depth investigation, research, comparison and analysis, Mao put forward the view that socialism has two stages: the underdeveloped and the comparatively developed. He warned that China should not be too hasty in claiming that socialism had already been built, concluding that China was and would be for a long time at "the underdeveloped stage of socialism."[18] With this basic understanding, he came to the preliminary realization that China's socialist construction would go through stages, last for a long period and suffer twists and turns. He said, "To build up a strong socialist economy in China, 50 years are not enough. It will take 100 years, maybe even more."[19] Mao's judgment that China was an underdeveloped socialist country was the ideological fountainhead of the Party's theory of the primary stage of socialism. It revealed the basis in the national situation and the basic starting point for China's socialist construction. Based on China's actual conditions, Mao made a scientific plan for China's socialist development strategy. Ever since the founding of the People's Republic of China, he had never stopped searching for a long-term strategy for China's socialist development, about which he made important statements. Right after the founding of the People's Republic, he put forward a plan for "three to five years of recovery and eight to ten years of development." In the early 1950s, he proposed the strategy of completing the task of transition after three five-year plans. During the process of socialist transformation, he put forward the idea of "passing three tests": the tests of democracy, the transition period and socialism. He repeatedly made clear the strategic goal of building China into a prosperous and powerful socialist nation that would catch up and overtake Britain, the US and other developed capitalist countries in fifty to a hundred years. In his article "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," he put forward a comparatively complete development strategy for socialist modernization: "Making China a socialist country with modern industry, modern agriculture, and modern science and culture."[20] While reading the Soviet text *Political Economy*, he added defense modernization to this strategy. "In addition to modernizing industry and agriculture, science and culture, we have to modernize national defense."[21] The forward-looking strategic goals of socialism he proposed have provided valuable guidance for the formulation of the Chinese socialist modernization strategy in the new era.

3. He developed theories of the basic and principal contradictions of socialism and of contradictions among the people, providing the philosophical basis and scientific method for

18 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 116.
19 *Ibid*., p. 301.
20 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 207.
21 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 116.

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the construction of Chinese-style socialism.

In "On Ten Major Relationships," "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People" and other articles, Mao, using the law of the unity of opposites, observed and analyzed the issues of class, class struggle and social contradictions in Chinese society and clearly put forward the innovative theory of the basic and principal contradictions of socialism and contradictions among the people. In the history of the development of Marxism, he was the first to point out explicitly that in socialist society the basic contradictions are still those between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base, and that although there is a basic correspondence between them, some contradictions remain between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base, contradictions that can be solved by gradually improving the socialist system through reforms. He pointed out that in the period of socialist construction, the principal contradiction in China was no longer the class struggle but the contradiction between people's rapidly growing economic and cultural needs and an economic and cultural status quo that could not satisfy these needs. This contradiction determined that the development of productivity was still the fundamental task of socialism. He made it clear that in socialist society we are confronted with two types of contradictions differing in nature—antagonistic contradictions between ourselves and the enemy and non-antagonistic ones among the people. He stressed that the two kinds of contradictions have to be resolved by different methods, so we must distinguish between them and handle them correctly. In particular, correct handling of contradictions among the people should be the main theme of national political life. In "On Ten Major Relationships," he followed Marxist materialist dialectics, providing a systematic discussion of major relationships of overall significance for socialist construction and development and emphasizing the need to use dialectical thinking and a holistic approach to deal with these relationships. That is, it was necessary to adhere to the "two-aspects" approach and at the same time focus on the key aspect; to resolve the principal as well as the non-principal contradictions; to deal with the interests of the country, the collective and individuals in a balanced way and not to focus on just one of them; and to respect both unity and independence in handling the relationship between the central and local governments. This dialectical thinking was to be implemented in all aspects of socialist construction. Mao's theory of the basic and principal contradictions in socialism and of contradictions among the people set up the philosophical basis for China's later basic line of restoring order out of chaos, carrying out reform and opening up and focusing on economic construction; and his exploration of methods of socialist construction established an important methodological basis for the correct line of socialist construction in later times.

4. He formulated the general principle and objective of socialist democratic construction, confirming the political direction and basic principles for the construction of Chinese-style socialism.

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After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mao was committed to exploring the road of socialist political development and urged the formation of good political conditions for socialist construction. In 1957 he introduced the overall goal of the construction of socialist democracy:"Our aim is to create a political situation in which we have both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness." How were such good political conditions to be created? In "On Ten Major Relationships," Mao came straight to the point and presented the basic policy of "mobilizing all positive factors, internal and external, to serve the cause of socialism." "We should mobilize all forces, whether direct or indirect, and strive to make China a powerful socialist country."[22] To bring into play all positive factors, he proposed properly handling a series of important political relationships. Among the ten major relationships he discussed, five dealt with political construction: the relationship between the Han ethnic group and ethnic minorities, the relationship between Party and non-Party, the relationship between revolution and counter-revolution, the relationship between right and wrong, and the relationship between China and other countries. Around these basic principles, he set out a series of important viewpoints on socialist democratic construction: for the country's fundamental political system, we must always adhere to the people's democratic dictatorship and implement the People's Congress system; for the relationship between the Party and democratic parties, we must strengthen the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party and exercise "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" between the CPC and democratic parties; on ethnic issues, we must resolutely implement the system of regional ethnic autonomy, promote democratic reform and economic and cultural development in ethnic minority areas, and oppose both Han chauvinism and ethnic chauvinism. Mao attached great importance to socialist democracy and the legal system. He repeatedly stressed that in China's political life, we should expand intra-party democracy and social democracy, and that in order to consolidate state power we must adhere to democratic centralism and promote socialist democracy. "Without democratic centralism, it is impossible to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat." On the issue of the legal system, he stressed that we must fight against bureaucracy and gradually improve the socialist legal system, making sure that "there are laws to abide by and they are strictly observed."

5. He sought economic theories and policies to guide socialist construction, making important theoretical innovations in political economy for Chinese-style socialist construction.

Mao emphasized that in order to promote China's socialist economic construction, it was necessary not only to adhere to the basic principles of Marxist political economy, but also to sum up China's experience on the basis of Chinese realities and constantly encourage theoretical innovation in Marxism. He said that we should cultivate our own theorists, create our own economic theories and formulate theories of political economy with Chinese

22 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 23.

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characteristics. While reading the Soviet text *Political Economy*, he pointed out clearly, "We must read books written by Marx and other old forerunners. First and foremost, we must follow their basic principles. But for all communist parties and all ideological circles in the world, new theories must be created, new works written and new theorists produced so as to serve the present politics. It will not do to rely on those old forerunners alone."[23] Mao himself made important theoretical innovations with regard to socialist theories of political economy and put forward a series of important theoretical conclusions with regard to the economic system, the commodity economy, opening up and so on. He was the first to advocate socialist commodity production and exchange, holding that commodity production itself was just a means and had nothing to do with the social system. To determine the system characteristics of a commodity economy, "We should see what economic system it is linked to. If it is linked to the capitalist system, then it is the capitalist commodity production. If it is linked to the socialist system, then it belongs to the socialist commodity production."[24] In the period of socialism, we must make maximum use of the commodity economy and let this tool serve socialist construction. China's commodity economy was very underdeveloped and we must "vigorously develop the socialist commodity production in a planned manner."[25] "It is wrong and against objective laws to blindly negate the commodity economy."[26] He made it clear that the law of value had a role to play in our country's socialist construction. "The law of value is a great school. Only by making use of it can we teach our tens of millions of cadres and hundreds of millions of people and build our socialism and communism. Otherwise nothing is possible."[27] Bearing in mind Chinese conditions, he made it clear that, based on the actual situation of China's economic development, we should be neither dogmatic nor westernized in dealing with capitalism and the private economy. He argued that we could develop the private economy on the basis of the state economy and develop capitalism on the premise of upholding socialism. "It is appropriate to develop the state economy and the private economy at the same time."[28] It was all right to develop capitalism after it had been eliminated, because "it is a supplement to the socialist economy."[29] With regard to the economic system and the ownership structure, he clearly raised the idea of arousing the initiatives of two sources: that of the central government and that of local governments. "We must not follow the example of the Soviet Union in concentrating everything in the hands of the central authorities, shackling the local authorities and denying them the right to independent action."[30] He urged a proper division of economic management power between central and local authorities and giving

23 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 109.
24 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 439.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 437.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 438.
27 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 34.
28 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 170.
29 Party Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, ed., *Liu Shaoqi's Analysis on New China's Economic Construction*, p. 327.
30 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 31.

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full play to the initiatives of two sources. On the issue of opening up to the outside world, he put forward the slogan of "learning from other countries"[31] and urged that the two-aspect rather than the one-aspect approach should be followed. "Our policy is to learn from the strong points of all nations and all countries, learn all that is genuinely good in the political, economic, scientific and technological fields and in literature and art. But we must learn with an analytical and critical eye, not blindly, and we mustn't copy everything indiscriminately and transplant mechanically."[32] On the basic principles and methods of economic construction, he proposed being neither conservative nor aggressive and making steady progress with an overall balanced approach; taking agriculture as the basis and industry as the leading force and drawing up national economic plans in the priority order of agriculture, light industry and heavy industry; and basing ourselves on China's specific circumstances, improving the overall balance, taking all factors into consideration, making appropriate arrangements and remaining diligent. With these assertions, Mao laid up important theoretical reserves for later times, on the basis of which our Party has brought forward reform of the economic system; opening up; the socialist market economy and other notions.

6. He drew up the policy and strategic thought of developing socialist culture, determining the ideological guide and cultural pivot for the construction of Chinese-style socialism.

Mao first clarified the fundamental guiding status of Marxism in China's socialist construction, firmly designating it as the soul of socialist ideology and culture. He emphasized repeatedly that Marxism is the theoretical basis guiding our thoughts, and "the basic principles of Marxism must never be violated, or otherwise mistakes will be made."[33] He insisted that Marxism is more than just the guiding thought of one aspect of our work; rather, it is the fundamental guideline for all the work of socialist construction and the beacon and ideological guarantee for all development and progress in contemporary China. We should never deviate from it or waver in our faith in it. He personally presided over writing Marxism-Leninism's role as the guiding ideology into China's first constitution. Thus, Marxism, the world view and methodology of the working class, the leading class of China, became the socialist will of the state, and the Party's guiding thought, as the mainstream ideology of the country, became the core content and the fundamental principle of China's socialist cultural construction. Strategically thinking of the long-term development of China's socialist system, he placed great stress on the cultivation of communist ideals and beliefs, putting forward as a major historic task the training of successors to the cause of communism and designating the criteria for such successors as being "both socialist-minded and technically competent." And he clearly put forward the six basic criteria of distinguishing cardinal issues of right and wrong in socialist cultural development: helping to unite the people of all ethnic groups, being beneficial to socialist transformation and socialist construction, helping to consolidate

31 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 41.
32 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
33 *Ibid.*, p. 281.

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the people's democratic dictatorship, helping to consolidate democratic centralism, helping to strengthen the leadership of the Communist Party, and being beneficial to international socialist unity and the unity of the peace-loving people of the world. He specially stressed that "of these six criteria, the most important are the two about the socialist path and the leadership of the Party."[34] These six criteria were the direct theoretical source of "the Four Cardinal Principles." Deng Xiaoping once said explicitly, "the Four Cardinal Principles are not new, and they are actually the principles that our Party has long been adhering to."[35] Mao was very creative in bringing about the basic policy of letting socialist culture develop and flourish. He pointed out that "letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is a long-term as well as a fundamental policy; it is not just a temporary policy."[36] He suggested "drawing from past and foreign achievements" and inheriting and absorbing the useful scientific and cultural knowledge of all times and all places. Attaching great importance to the role of science and technology in socialist construction, he clearly put forward the slogan of "marching towards science" and treated the modernization of science and technology as an important component of socialist modernization. Fully endorsing the status and role of intellectuals in socialist construction, he clearly stated that the majority of China's intellectuals were already an integral part of the Chinese working class and that to achieve the great goal of reaching advanced world levels, "there must be cadres and there must be a sufficient number of outstanding scientific and technical experts."[37]

7. He laid down the general policies of China's diplomatic work, striving for favorable external conditions for the construction of Chinese-style socialism.

In laying down the basic principles for China's handling of international relations, Mao put forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. To define the overall world order, he proposed the strategic idea of a division into "three worlds," with China identified as a third world country. He believed that in order to cast off superpower control and fight against colonialism, imperialism and hegemony, China should unite with all the other third world countries and win over the second world countries. He argued that China was not and would never be a superpower and tried hard to develop and improve relations with the newly emerging independent nation-states, especially neighboring countries. On inter-party relations, he emphasized that the communist parties of different countries were brothers rather than father and sons, and should determine their own guidelines and policies in accordance with the specific conditions of their own countries. He insisted that, in the socialist camp, each country should independently explore the socialist road in accordance with its own

34 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 234.
35 Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 2, p. 165.
36 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, p. 278.
37 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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situation. On the relationship between relying on oneself and learning from other countries, he confirmed the basic line of giving priority to self-reliance and taking foreign assistance as a supplement. He stressed that we should do away with superstition and independently develop our own industry, agriculture, science and technology and culture, and that we should get rid of slavish thinking, bury dogmatism and earnestly learn from other countries' good experience as well as studying their bad experience. Mao upheld an independent foreign policy and waged a struggle against superpowers like the U.S. and the Soviet Union in order to protect China's sovereignty. He strongly opposed the "two China" conspiracy concocted by the U.S., and at the same time resisted pressure from the Soviet Union and made reasonable adjustments to inter-Party and inter-country relations within the socialist camp. He improved China's relationship with neighboring countries in all respects and peacefully solved border disputes with neighbors to the southwest. He handled China's relations with the three world forces appropriately and actively bolstered friendly cooperation with developing countries, especially those in Asia, Africa and Latin America. After long and arduous diplomatic struggles, the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations were restored at the 26th U.N. General Assembly in 1971, marking a great breakthrough for China's diplomacy. On the premise of opposing great power hegemony, China entered into all-round diplomatic communication with France, Canada, Italy, the UK, Japan and other Western powers, and successfully started the historical process of normalization of Sino-US relations. These significant diplomatic achievements greatly improved China's national security and expanded its stage of diplomatic activities. Furthermore, they created a better international environment for China's socialist construction and provided the precondition and foundation for China's reform and opening up and its more active participation in international affairs in the new era.

8. Mao insisted on the Party's core leadership in socialist construction, providing an important organizational guarantee for the construction of Chinese-style socialism.

Mao provided profound discussions of the Party's important position in socialist construction, stressing that it was the core of the leadership of all people in the country and the core force leading the cause of Chinese socialist construction and that we must adhere to its leadership at all times. At the second plenary session of the Seventh Party Central Committee, he warned all Party comrades not to forget "the two musts"(comrades must remain modest, prudent and free from arrogance and rashness in their style of work and must preserve the style of plain living and hard struggle). Right after the founding of the People's Republic of China, in view of the situation and trends the Party faced after seizing power, he proposed without delay the urgent task of strengthening the building of the ruling party, emphasizing that we must be constantly vigilant and prevent the Party from changing nature or color. He attached great importance to the building of Party institutions, emphasizing the need to maintain and develop democratic centralism, foster democracy within the Party, reinforce supervision within the Party, strengthen the collective leadership, oppose personality

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cults, and defend the Party's unity and solidarity. He put forward the initial idea of abolishing the life-tenure system for leaders and said explicitly that he hoped to resign from his leadership post, and proposed that the older central leaders should withdraw from the frontline to the second line and that Party representatives should have permanency and leading cadres a system of limited tenure. He also made the scientific assertion that ideological work was the lifeblood for all work, etc., greatly strengthening the building of the Party's working style and ideology. He stressed that we must always carry out the Party's mass line, set up close ties with the masses and oppose subjectivism, sectarianism and bureaucracy, so as to comprehensively promote the great project of Party building.

III. The Positive and Negative Lessons Learned in Socialist Construction Have Accumulated, Providing Valuable Experience for Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

Carrying out socialist construction was unprecedented in China, so that we had to conduct practice in the midst of exploration and summing up in the midst of development in the course of our construction. On June 12, 1961, Mao said at a working conference of the Party's Central Committee, "Nobody has built socialism before. Besides, it is impossible for us to learn specific socialist policies before we build socialism. We have carried out socialist construction for eleven years, and now we need to sum up experiences."[38] There is no plain sailing in exploration and mistakes are inevitable, but people can learn valuable lessons from mistakes. On September 3, 1963, Mao said, "We have two kinds of experiences, the wrong and the right. Experience gained from correct action has encouraged us and experiences from mistakes have taught us good lessons."[39] Mao's explorations left us with both successful experiences and mistakes. Both built up a store of valuable experience and important inspiration for today's construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

1. We need to unswervingly adhere to the guidance of Marxism and to promote the sinicization of Marxism with unremitting efforts.

At the First National People's Congress, Mao pointed out explicitly that the theoretical basis guiding our thoughts is Marxism-Leninism. Since then, Marxism has been written into the Constitution and has become the glorious banner guiding the Chinese people in their socialist construction. Only by upholding the combination of the basic principles of Marxism with China's realities could the Party start independently exploring the road of socialist construction, achieve significant successes and repeatedly correct mistakes made in the course of exploration, successfully opening up the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new historical period. In order to further promote the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we must unswervingly adhere to the guidance of

38 Mao Zedong, *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, p. 276.
39 *Ibid.*, p. 338.

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Marxism and consolidate the theoretical foundation of the development of the Party and the country. Any attempt to call for the diversification of the guiding ideology is unacceptable. At the same time, we should treat Marxism scientifically but not dogmatically. We should make great efforts to use the basic principles of Marxism to solve conflicts and problems in development, put forward new ideas, perspectives and assertions, develop Marxism so that it keeps pace with the times, achieve theoretical innovations in the sinicization of Marxism, and use continuously innovative and sinicized Marxism to guide ongoing practice.

2. We need to unswervingly adhere to the leadership of the Party and unceasingly improve the scientific level of building the Party in power.

In the process of exploring the road of constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics, Mao repeatedly stressed that the Party is the core force that leads our cause. The core leadership of the Party is not self-appointed, but the choice of the history and the people. The Party led the people in establishing the state power of the people's democratic dictatorship, realizing the dream of people being the masters in their own country, setting up the socialist system, bringing about the most profound social change in Chinese history, and creating the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics through arduous exploration. The Party is the core of the leadership for all development and progress in modern China. In order to further promote the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we must unswervingly adhere to and consolidate the Party's leadership, and bring into full play the Party's core function of grasping the overall situation and coordinating all sides. Any proposal that attempts to engage in a multi-party system or to challenge the Party's leadership is unacceptable. At the same time, we must continuously raise the scientific level of Party building, keep its advanced nature and purity, enhance its creativity, cohesion and fighting capacity, improve its style of leadership and governance, increase the standard of its scientific, democratic and law-based governance, and turn it into a learning-oriented, service-oriented and innovative Marxist ruling party, so as to ensure that it will always be a firm leadership core advancing the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

3. We need to unswervingly keep to the socialist path and to firmly establish the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Only socialism can save China; this is the unshakable historical conclusion drawn by the Chinese people through their arduous exploration and practice of revolution, construction and reform aimed at saving the country and the people since the nineteenth century. Without socialism, China will inevitably retrogress to the status of being semi-feudal, semi-colonial, backward and vulnerable to attack. After reform and opening up, our Party successfully opened up a socialist path with Chinese characteristics. Socialism has been a great success in China and has produced remarkable achievements that have attracted world attention. Only socialism with Chinese characteristics can achieve development in China; it is the basic direction for China's contemporary development and progress, and has increasingly become the collective consensus of all the Chinese people. Any attempt to return to the old road of

implementing rigid closed-door policies or to take the deviant path of changing one's flag and abandoning socialism is extremely erroneous. As Xi Jinping, the Party's General Secretary, has said, "In essence, socialism with Chinese characteristics is scientific socialism rather than other-ism." "It is the dialectical unity of the theoretical logic of scientific socialism and the historical logic of China's social development. It is the scientific socialism rooted in the land of China, reflecting the Chinese people's wishes and adapting to the development and progress demands of both China and the times." We should resolutely reject any attempt to abandon the basic principles of scientific socialism or to use various other "isms" or "doctrines" to explain or even replace the idea of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

4. We need to strengthen and consolidate the people's democratic dictatorship and to provide the most reliable guarantee for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The national government under the people's democratic dictatorship is the basic guarantee for the Chinese people's development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Essentially the people's democratic dictatorship means democracy towards the people and dictatorship over the enemy. Without the people's democratic dictatorship, it would be impossible for us to defend and then build socialism. To develop socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics, we must uphold the organic unity of adhering to the Party's leadership, ensuring that the people are masters of the country and governing the country according to law. We must expand socialist democracy, accelerate the construction of a socialist country under the rule of law and develop socialist political civilization, in order to ensure that making the people masters of the country is taken as the basis and enhancing the vitality of the Party and the state and mobilizing the people's enthusiasm is taken as the goal. However, the development of socialist democracy does not mean weakening or even doing away with dictatorship over hostile forces which are hostile to and undermine socialism. Now that we are at a critical period of reform and opening up, some hostile forces opposing socialism are trying to seize the opportunity to cause disturbances, and hostile Western forces are also pressing on with the Westernization and fragmentation of China. They try to foment ethnic separation and endanger social stability, stirring up a special form of class struggle. Toward these hostile forces attempting to subvert socialism, we must exercise the people's democratic dictatorship, otherwise the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics will be affected.

5. We need to firmly seize the core duty of economic construction and take the development of the socialist production forces as the fundamental task.

In the early years, under Mao's leadership the Party and the country shifted the central task in a timely fashion to socialist construction with economic construction at its core and vigorously developed society's productive forces. Later, at one time China deviated from the right track of economic construction and went through a few detours. Since reform and opening up, our Party has made it clear that poverty is not socialism and that development is the absolute principle; we must persist in taking economic construction as the central task

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and adhering to reform and opening up and to the basic line of the Four Cardinal Principles, so that China's economic and social development will continue to achieve new leaps forward. To further promote the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we must take the liberation and development of the productive forces as the fundamental duty, uphold the principle that taking economic development as the central task is vital to national renewal, promote sustained and sound economic development, and lay a solid material foundation for enhancing the country's prosperity and strength, improving the people's wellbeing, and ensuring social harmony and stability. Any ideas attempting to undermine the central position of economic construction or replace it with other "centers," or to advocate a "multi-center theory" are wrong and must be firmly opposed.

6. We must not for a moment forget the Party's ideology and publicity work or loosen our grasp on it, but must continuously consolidate and strengthen the Party and the people's common ideological foundation of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Historical experience shows that we will run into big problems if either economic or ideological work is not handled well. As the central task, economic construction should be grasped firmly, and so should ideological work. While taking economic construction as the central task, we must give high priority to the Party's ideology and publicity work as well. We should intensify the ethical and moral construction of the whole Party and the people, and the construction of core socialist values. We should reinforce the ideological and theoretical foundation on which the whole Party and the people can unite and strive to develop socialism with Chinese characteristics.

7. We need to formulate guidelines and policies according to the basic reality that China is in the primary stage of socialism, and to promote reform and opening up with the greatest political boldness.

The basis and starting point for correctly formulating guidelines and policies is to scientifically recognize and master China's basic reality. Only when we can do so correctly and scientifically will we be able to develop the cause of socialist construction smoothly, otherwise we will run into twists and turns and even serious setbacks. As early as the period of democratic revolution, Mao pointed out, "a clear understanding of the nature of Chinese society, that is, of Chinese conditions, is therefore the key to a clear understanding of all the problems of the revolution."[40] Understanding Chinese conditions was important for the revolution, and is even more so for construction and reform. Since reform and opening up, our Party has had a scientific understanding of China's basic reality and claimed clearly that China still is and will be for a long time in the primary stage of socialism. The Party has formulated policies on the basis of this great reality and promoted reform and development in all respects. With full awareness of the basic reality that China is in the primary stage of socialism, we must persevere with reform and opening up, which are crucial to upholding

40 Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 2, p. 633.

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and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, and must apply the spirit of reform and innovation to all aspects of governance. We should, with increased political boldness and wisdom, develop and improve the basic economic system in which public ownership is the mainstay and economic entities with diverse forms of ownership develop together. We should combine the socialist system with the market economy and develop and improve the socialist market economic system. At the same time, we should also keep promoting reform and innovation in politics, culture, society and other fields, to realize the self-improvement and self-development of China's socialist system.

8. We need to combine respect for historical laws with the respect for the masses' creativity, building up a historical synergy for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Socialist construction is a grand historical project and also a very difficult and complex undertaking, so we must respect objective laws and act according to the laws of economic construction. Socialism is also a mass undertaking, so we must fully respect the creativity of the masses. Mao was able to propose a timely shift of the focus of work to economic construction and to make developing the socialist productive forces the central task. He argued that the law of value is a big school for us and we must learn economic laws. He was able to lead the broad masses to convert their enthusiasm for building socialism to action in a timely fashion, setting off an upsurge of socialist construction. In his quest for building socialism in China, Mao put special emphasis on the following basic principles: mobilizing all positive factors, uniting all forces that can be united, building China into a great socialist power, and making a greater contribution to the development and revitalization of the Chinese nation and the peaceful development of mankind. He also warned us that disregarding the objective laws of historical development would lead to the one-sided exaggeration of subjective initiative and indulgence in subjectivism, and disregarding the creativity of the mass of the people would result in missed development opportunities. Both of these errors would severely undermine socialist construction. Therefore, to develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, we must respect the objective laws of historical development and scientifically draw up development strategies and policies. At the same time, we must respect the creativity of the mass of the people and firmly adhere to the principal agency of the people. Only by realizing the smooth interaction between the objective and the subjective can we achieve historical synergy in the promotion of the development and progress of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

9. We need to be bold in correcting mistakes in our work and sum up experiences and lessons promptly, promoting the healthy development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Due to lack of historical experience and the impact of various factors, Mao made some serious missteps in his exploration of the road of socialist construction. As a true Marxist, he faced mistakes and setbacks boldly and made great efforts to correct errors in work. He repeatedly took corrective actions, vigorously advocated investigation and research, gave full play to democracy within the Party and among the people, absorbed wisdom from all quarters,

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took the lead in self-criticism, and had the courage to correct mistakes in work, enabling the national economy to recover and adjust relatively well and greatly reducing the losses caused by errors and ensuring that socialist construction proceeded healthily as a whole. Of course, as a result of major deviations that appeared in judging the principal internal contradiction, China suffered even more serious setbacks after the mid-1960s. Although Mao again made some attempts to correct the situation, there was not a fundamental change. Since reform and opening up, being fully conscious of the experiences and lessons of the past, our Party has made the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics ever more prosperous and the socialist road with Chinese characteristics ever broader. Today, the cause of reform and opening up has reached a critical period once again. As contemporary Party members, we should neither imagine that mistakes will not occur, nor panic or deliberately dodge them when they do. We should dare to find, admit and correct our mistakes and make timely summaries of our experiences and lessons. We should guide our new practice with ever-developing Marxism and constantly enhance developmental guidance in a scientific manner, so as to further advance the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

10. We need to thoroughly explore the scientific method of socialist construction and improve the overall disposition of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

One of the most valuable and important lessons Mao left posterity was analyzing, understanding and correctly handling the major relationships in socialist construction. Since reform and opening up, our Party has upheld and developed this valuable experience and correctly understood and properly handled the major relationships in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Party takes a holistic approach to various kinds of work relating to reform, development and stability, to domestic and foreign affairs and national defense, and to running the Party, the country and the military. It coordinates urban and rural development, inter-regional development, economic and social development, relations between man and nature, and domestic development and opening to the outside world. It balances the interests of all parties and creates a situation conducive to development. In the course of further advancing the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we must more purposefully explore scientific methods of reform and development, pursue comprehensive, balanced and sustainable scientific development, and fully implement and continuously improve the overall "five-in-one" approach of promoting economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress. We must ensure coordinated progress in all areas of endeavor in the socialist modernization drive, balance the relations of production with the productive forces and the superstructure with the economic base, and continue to expand the path of development that leads to increased production, prosperity and a sound ecosystem.

Today, China is standing at a new historical starting point for the achievement of socialist modernization and the great renewal of the Chinese nation. The 18th Party Congress comprehensively and systematically put forward eight basic requirements for developing socialism with Chinese characteristics: maintain the people's principal position in the

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country, continue to release and develop the productive forces, persevere in reform and opening up, safeguard social fairness and justice, strive for common prosperity, promote social harmony, pursue peaceful development, and uphold the leadership of the Party. These basic requirements reveal the most essential things for building socialism with Chinese characteristics and reflect the laws of governance of the Party, the laws of building socialism and the laws of the development of human society. They demonstrate the Party's in-depth grasp of the laws of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and have a far-reaching and long-term significance for guiding our country in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. We must unwaveringly adhere to the basic requirements of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and endeavor to advance the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must strive to realize the China Dream of socialist modernization and the great renewal of the Chinese nation and must create a happier future for the Chinese people and the Chinese nation.

Without Mao's groundbreaking work and pioneering exploration, there would be no socialism with Chinese characteristics today. Similarly, without today's socialism with Chinese characteristics, the cause of socialist construction initiated by Mao would not be sustainable.

Notes on Contributor

Wang Weiguang is President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Group in CASS, and also Chairman of the Presidium of the CASS Committee of Academic Divisions. He is a Doctor of Philosophy, a doctoral supervisor, a professor and a CASS member. He formerly served as Vice President of the Central Party School and Executive Vice President of CASS. He was an alternate member of the 17th CPC Central Committee and is a member of the 18th CPC Central Committee. He is Director of the Chinese Association of Dialectical Materialism Research and a member and chief expert on the Advisory Committee of the Marxist Theory Research and Construction Project. He has been awarded the honorary title of "Chinese Doctorate Recipient with an Outstanding Contribution" by the State Council and enjoys a special government allowance. He has long been engaged in research on Marxist theory and philosophy and on major theories and practical problems of socialism with Chinese characteristics. E-mail: zhouyebing@163.com.

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